THE GREATEST FACT IN MODERN HISTORY

WHITELAW REID

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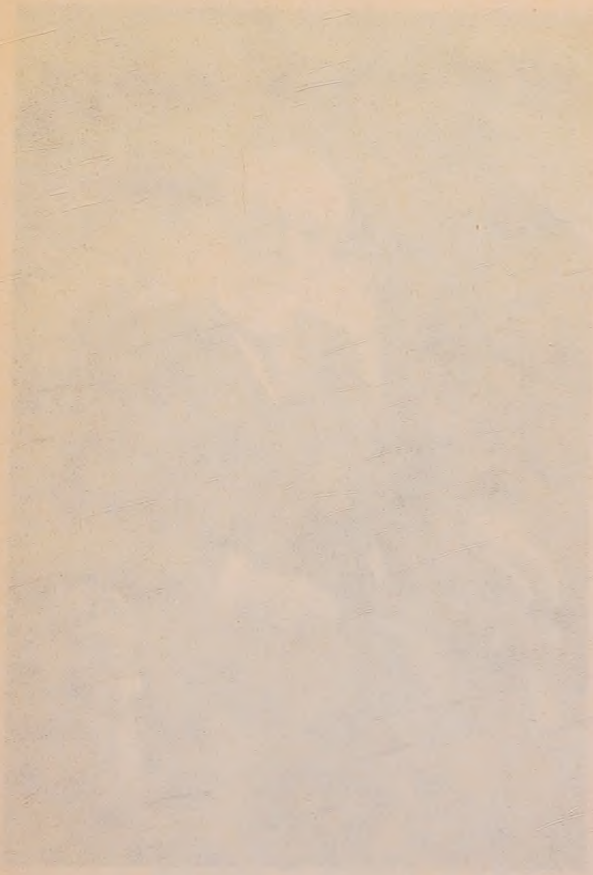

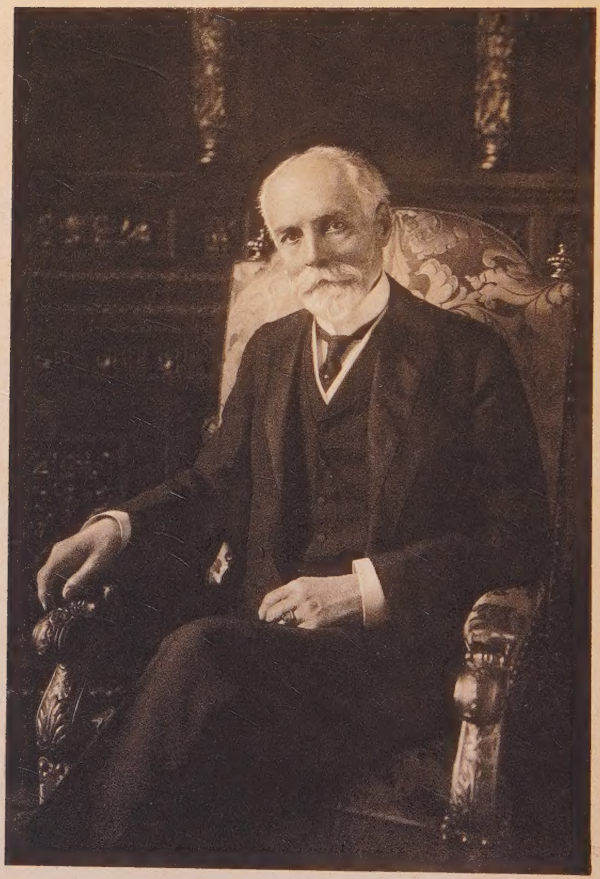

The Greatest Fact In Modern History

By Whitelaw Reid

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Publishers' Note

THE following paper was prepared at the invitation of Cambridge University by the American Ambassador to Great Britain and delivered in the Senate House as the opening address in the course on the Eighteenth Century for the summer meeting of 1906. The University authorities named the subject. The Ambassador said at the time he never should have chosen it for that audience, but when it was chosen for him he was unwilling to run away from it. The Vice-chancellor presided and introduced him, and at the close the Bishop of Ely moved and the Mayor of Cambridge seconded a vote of thanks, which was unanimously carried.

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I AM asked to speak to you on the greatest fact in modern history, the rise and development of the United States.

Neither George Canning nor his King called this New World into being, and it was not called into being by anybody for the purpose of redressing the balance of the Old. As to its most significant, and, for a long time, its leading settlements, it was called into being by Charles I., when he pursued Separatists, non-Conformists, and others, in the professed interest of the Church of England. Its growth was checked by the rise of Oliver Cromwell; and while the Protectorate lasted the Puritan emigration ceased. Charles II. revived it, and he and his brother James, by their treatment of the Puritans in England, and the Covenanters in Scotland, did more than any other human power to make New England and other large sections of the United States what they are.

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Tudors and Stuarts alike, whatever their intentions, were helpful to the infancy of the new nation, and there is fitness in its possessing enduring monuments to commemorate them, Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, Jamestown, and James River.

England in the first years of the XVII Century

At the beginning of this period, say at the opening of the Seventeenth Century, and near the close of Queen Elizabeth's long reign, all England was much less than London is now. The total population of England was a little over four millions, and what is now far the greatest city in the world had then possibly a quarter of one million within its limits. A rapid increase was prevented, in fact a material decrease had been caused, by the enormous death rate, due to epidemics which science had not learned to control, to unhealthful surroundings, to constant wars, and to a deplorable waste of human life in the ordinary administration of justice. Between 1592 and 1665 London had eight visitations of the plague. The sweating sickness and the smallpox were almost equally dreaded and equally uncontrollable. The unsanitary habits of the people were extraordinary. The very King for whom the first settlement in Virginia was named, if the declaration

of James Balfour may be trusted, never washed even his hands. Prisoners were tortured, robbers were hung, witches and religious men whose orthodoxy was not our doxy were burned. For trivial offences men and women were whipped or set in the stocks, or nailed by their ears to the pillory. Witchcraft was so firmly embedded in the faith of the people that the greatest legal writer of his time, Sir William Blackstone, said as late as when the American Colonies were on the point of revolting, that every nation in the world had borne testimony to it, and that to deny it was to deny the revealed word of God.

This is, of course, not a fair picture of the England from which the Colonists went out, though some of the noticeable features are accurately portrayed. You can faintly conceive the limitations of the England of that day, how little it was like the present world, when you add that it knew nothing of the circulation of the blood, of vaccination, of gravitation, of the velocity of light, of the power of steam, of illumination by petroleum, gas, or electricity, of communication by fast or cheap mails, of the telegraph or the telephone; that it had no newspapers, and that its books were few and dear.

Yet this England had Magna Charta, and

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parliamentary government; had greater and better secured personal liberties than any other country in Europe, and was more jealously watchful of them; had an inbred respect for law and for its officers, and, in spite of a degree of illiteracy that seems now surprising, probably led Europe also in diffused intelligence and in a reasoning devotion to religion. In the gallery of England's immortals, Milton was soon to be added to Shakespeare; and the nation was rapidly approaching the great contest in which religious zeal and a passion for civil liberty in an almost equal coöperation were to precipitate a revolution and execute a King.

The New World and its Colonists

Meantime, the land in which the new nation was to spring up, a land of rivers and lakes and unbroken forests, beyond the Atlantic, lay palpitating with wild life under summer suns or blanketed under winter snows, practically unpeopled. The first feeble colony arrived at Jamestown seven years after the opening of the century; the little company borne by the "Mayflower" to Plymouth Rock thirteen years after that. The only inhabitants at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century were the mysterious Aborigines, whose origin, languages, and customs were alike unknown, whose trails

through the forests were the only roads, whose patches of Indian corn were the only agriculture, whose clusters of wigwams were the only cities. Between the Great Lakes and the Gulf, from the Atlantic to the Alleghanies, there were in all less than 200,000 of them, in limits which now contain the second city in the world, seventeen great States, and a total population of over thirty millions.

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At the beginning of the Eighteenth Century this New World had started into full life among the forests. Scattered and still feeble Colonies, controlled and mainly peopled by Great Britain, lay in isolated settlements along the Atlantic coast, from Massachusetts to the Gulf of Mexico, and at several points were spreading westward toward the Alleghanies. By this time they had come to include a sprinkling of several Northern races — soon to melt wonderfully into the Anglo-Saxon mould and to renounce other allegiance in order to seek the privileges of British subjects. There were Dutch in New York — in fact New York was, for about half a century, a Dutch city. There were Swedes in Delaware, and Germans in Pennsylvania, and to these were added the best France had to give in a considerable influx of the persecuted and exiled Huguenots. There were many sects too,

and these did not melt so readily into one mould. There were Puritans in most of New England, Baptists in Rhode Island, Episcopalians in New York and Virginia, Presbyterians in New Jersey and the Carolinas, Quakers and Lutherans in Pennsylvania, Roman Catholics in Maryland. All of them insisted on freedom to enjoy their own religion—many of them had come to an uninhabited country for that purpose—but not all were ready to tolerate other people's religion.

At times there had been efforts to impose upon them the Established Church of England, but to this they thought consent impossible. Religion and education they fostered alike. The Church and the schoolhouse went with every fresh pioneer settlement. But many of them left England to escape Bishops, others to escape the ruling classes, and in their new homes they would submit neither to a prelacy nor to a nobility. They demanded the right of the English-born to participate in the government, but they were not ready to let everybody share it with them. In the early days of New England none but Church members could vote or hold office. As late as 1679, hardly one grown man in Massachusetts out of five could vote. Cotton denounced democracy, thinking, no

doubt, before Montesquieu, that liberty may be least safe under a rule of the mere majority. Nobody dreamed of letting Indians or negroes vote. Till long after the Revolution a considerable property qualification was required from every voter.

In one way or another they were ruled by officers from England; and they brought with them the general body of English law. But they had organized parliamentary government in most of the Colonies, on the English pattern, with more exact representation and under written constitutional arrangements more precise than England had ever employed. They looked to England for protection, spoke of it habitually as home, and held themselves under its authority; yet they already exercised a large measure of local self-government, rightly considered this a necessity of their remote situation and peculiar perils, and regarded any infringement upon it with even more than the historical Anglo-Saxon jealousy.

The old ideas of blind loyalty to the throne had been shaken, first by the Puritan revolt against Charles, and later by the deposition of James. They had twice seen Parliament set aside a King, and it was only a step from this to the belief that not the King but the representa-

tives chosen by the people must always be, in the end, the controlling power of the State. From that again, the distant Colonists found it only a step farther to the belief that in their remote isolation they should choose their own representatives instead of submitting to a rule by representatives chosen back in England for English purposes. Thus early had the "Mother of Parliaments" taught the sons of Great Britain beyond seas to better her instructions.

And yet a personal sense of loyalty to the Sovereign remained down to the very outset of the Revolution, often as strong in America as in England, sometimes stronger and generally more disinterested. Benjamin Franklin wrote privately, in 1768, to his friends at home of George III. as "the best monarch any nation was ever blessed with." In 1769, when he had to report the refusal by the House of Commons to repeal offensive customs duties, he used even stronger language:

"I hope nothing that has happened or may happen will diminish in the least our loyalty to our Sovereign or affection for this nation in general. I can scarcely conceive a King of better dispositions, or more exemplary virtues, or more truly desirous of promoting the welfare of all his subjects. The body of this peo-

ple, too, is of a noble and generous nature, loving and honoring the spirit of liberty, and hating arbitrary power of all sorts. We have many, very many friends among them."

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Seven years later came the bitter arraignment of the same Sovereign in the Declaration of Independence, and the richest possession of the English crown was lost forever.

From the outset the Colonists were thrown on their own resources, in a wild continent and among savage people. The survival of the fittest made them a picked body, a real corps d'élite. Their faculties were quickened by necessity, by danger and by climate. The lonely life and the necessity for quick decisions, often without much opportunity for consultation, led to a marked personal independence, an ever-ready resourcefulness, and an absolute freedom of individual initiative, which speedily became general characteristics.

But at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, their opinions and their traits had not worked out to the logical conclusion. With all their personal independence, the Colonists never dreamed of standing alone; with all their free personal initiative they still looked implicitly to the Mother Country for guidance.

The growth of these Colonies, which for a

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long time was slow, painful, and intermittent, had of late become more rapid. Their population was only about 200,000 when James II. was deposed and William and Mary came to the throne. A quarter of a century later, when the House of Hanover came in with the accession of George I., the tables compiled for the Board of Trade, giving in detail the whites and negroes in the Colonies, showed an aggregate of 434,000. The number had thus more than doubled. In the next half century this again was trebled. By 1754, when the movements for taxing America were about to begin, there were 1,165,000 whites and 253,000 negroes; say, in round numbers nearly a million and a half.

England in the xviii Century

The England which after a variable, but on the whole not unmotherly, care of the Colonies was now to enter upon that unhappy experiment of arbitrary taxation, presented almost as strong a contrast to the England we have seen in the closing days of Elizabeth, as did the thirteen Colonies of 1754 to the New World before Jamestown and Plymouth. In numbers it had grown from four millions to perhaps ten. In government it had passed from Essex to Newcastle and Bute. Landmarks on that long

road were a civil war, a Commonwealth, a restoration, more discontent, a deposition, the choice of a new Sovereign from abroad, and enormously increased power in Parliament. And now at last another royalist reaction, with revival of old prerogatives through parliamentary methods by purchased majorities, was to precipitate a crisis in the American possessions. Meantime, the nation had enjoyed an enormous extension of commerce, beginning with the revolution in 1688, had prospered on Colonial trade, had won glory in foreign wars. Of its entire exports one-fourth was taken by its Colonies in America; under the inspiring guidance of Chatham, England was rapidly coming to the front in both hemispheres; and this political leadership among the nations was followed by a sudden and enormous increase in national wealth.

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But in the attempt now to begin for stretching the power of the Crown in the Colonies, one thing was forgotten. While the people that elected their Sovereign by Parliament had thus made their own representatives supreme, few realized that Americans could learn the lesson. It scarcely entered many English minds that those dependent poor relations might in their turn demand an equal authority for their

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representatives. Ministers at this date were indeed curiously ignorant of the Colonies. Distance, inattention, and misinformation co-operated to produce political blindness. An acute English historian, explaining how subservient and prejudiced English officials in America misled their Sovereign, said that in fact "his own Governors, by their reports to him, wrote King George out of America." To them, and so easily enough to him, it seemed a natural thing that the Colonists should be content to buy everything from England—unreasonable that they should want to manufacture things for themselves; a matter of course that they should accept interference from England in their domestic concerns, and pay English taxes—disloyal and rebellious that they should hesitate.

Support by the Colonists

And yet these uneasy Colonists had given splendid proof of their devotion. Unaided, they had captured Louisburg, then the greatest French stronghold in America, for the British Crown. They had responded to Pitt's calls, involving both men and money, far beyond reasonable expectations. Nearly two-thirds of Abercrombie's force on Lake George had been sent from New England, New York, and New

Jersey. Another year Connecticut had 5,000 men under arms to support the British campaign, and Massachusetts 7,000. When disasters came, the feeble Colonists strained afresh their resources. Massachusetts sent out one in six of all its inhabitants capable of bearing arms, and Connecticut an equal or even greater proportion. While the war lasted that expelled the French from the Great Lakes and from the Ohio, New Jersey taxed herself at the rate of a pound per head for every inhabitant. Massachusetts levied on personal incomes at the rate of thirteen shillings and fourpence to the pound, besides land-taxes, poll-taxes, and even Colonial stamp-taxes. Connecticut, though feebler in resources, was no whit behind. With such warmth did the Colonists support the great sympathetic Minister of the Crown, while he rescued Tennessee, Michigan, and the country of the Great Lakes, conquered the West, and conquered Canada. What might not have happened had Chatham but remained in power?

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At this period the Colonies had been developing in America for about a century and a half. England might well have taken pride in the result, for the race that had sprung up amid

A people to be proud of

the trials of the Western wilderness, though different from the race at home, had lost few of its conspicuous virtues and had found others. The Colonists were, in the main, curiously orderly and law abiding. They were temperate, moral, generally religious. The world had never seen such widely scattered rural communities with a more general diffusion of intelligence and a smaller percentage of illiteracy. Everybody worked and enjoyed the fruits of his labor—there were no rich and comparatively few poor. There was a nearer approach to equality of opportunity than older countries could show, and to personal equality when the opportunity had been wisely improved. There was no governing class; all took part in the government, and the man who had been called to the public service, at the end of it dropped back naturally into his position, and instead of making laws might again be making shoes. There were no palaces, but (away from the frontier settlements) there were very few hovels; and according to the standard of the times the mass of the population was probably as comfortably housed as in England, and with better surroundings, though often in unpainted dwellings of wood.

The proportion of considerable landholders to mere householders was naturally larger than in older communities. Social life was everywhere simple, but not without dignity or, in the rising cities, without grace. They had the English virtue of hospitality, accompanied by the unusual freedom from reserve or constraint, which came with their environment. In a word, they were, in the main, like the best type of English middle-class rural population, but with the independence and alertness bred of the never-ending conflict with the wild country, wild beasts, and wild men. Chatham and Burke were proud of their Americans; it would have been well for Newcastle and Bute and men higher still, if at least they had understood them.

These last left such comprehension instead to a young Frenchman whom the world a few years later was glad to listen to. "Vast regions of America!" exclaimed Turgot, at the Sorbonne, in 1750. "Equality keeps them from both luxury and want, and preserves to them purity and simplicity with freedom. Europe herself will find there the perfection of her political societies and the surest support of her well-being. But," Turgot added, in words that

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might have borne a profitable warning across the Channel, "colonies are like fruits, which cling to the tree only till they ripen."

How that predicted end was hastened with such an English people as we have been describing, by efforts to abridge or withdraw rights on which all Englishmen insisted, may now be seen in the events of the next twenty years. The tendency was noticeable in the later Ministries of George II.; the policy was pursued with continuity and earnestness from the accession of George III.

Early exactions

In 1750 the construction of more iron mills in the American Colonies was forbidden, that there might be more demand for the English product. While the liberty to manufacture was thus hampered, the liberty to import slaves, under the guise of a right to trade between the Barbary Coast and the Cape of Good Hope, was in the very same year extended specifically "to all subjects of the King of England." In 1753 a new Governor was instructed to withhold from the New York Assembly the right it had always exercised of considering and voting annually the allowances for the support of the government and of examining the ac-

counts. This Englishman (Sir Danvers Osborne), when he found these men of English blood and parliamentary experience would not submit to such orders, was so horror-stricken at the situation in which he was involved, that he went out and hanged himself. The next year the Colonies were required to contribute to a general fund, and Halifax, by the King's command, proposed an American Union for that purpose, with a congress of one Commissioner from each Colony to adjust the quotas. Ominous suggestion! Franklin had already favored the Union, but with modifications. He would have no taxation by Parliament, unless with ample representation in that body, and legislation on an equal basis for all.

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A year later, in 1756, the British Commander-in-Chief was reinforcing the recommendation of various royal Governors for an Act of Parliament levying a stamp duty, a poll-tax, and an excise-tax on all the Colonies for a general fund, and, if any Colony failed to pay promptly, providing means for collecting by Royal Warrants of distraint and imprisonment. He was succeeded the same year by Loudoun, who, under a commission prepared by Chancellor Hardwicke, was instructed to make the

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Colonial Assemblies "distinctly and precisely understand" that the King required of them "a general fund to be issued and applied as the Commander-in-Chief should direct," and likewise to pay for the quarters of the soldiers. When an attempt was made, under this, to billet officers of the army upon New York City, the Mayor objected that it was contrary to the laws of England, the privileges of Englishmen, and common law. "Free quarters are everywhere usual," replied the Commander-in-Chief; "I assert it on my honor, which is the highest evidence you require. God damn my blood, if you do not billet my officers upon free quarters this day, I'll order here all the troops in North America under my command, and billet them all upon the city myself." New York submitted, unwillingly enough, and soon after Philadelphia, under similar compulsion, did the same. While the troops were thus quartered in the principal cities, the frontiers were left open to the Indians and the French.

George III The Stamp tax

With such conditions prevailing in America, George III. came to the throne in October, 1760. It took scarcely fourteen years more to precipitate the crisis. Early in 1761 the restric-

tions in the Acts of Trade were brought into court in Boston, and James Otis appeared to resist the call upon all executive officers and subjects of the Colony to assist in their enforcement. His arguments were cogent, but what startled alike the Court and the community was the defiant challenge he flung at the feet of the judges. He would sacrifice everything, he said, to "the sacred calls of his country, in opposition to a kind of power, the exercise of which cost one King of England his head and another his throne." The Court, quite staggered for the moment, postponed a decision, and the Chief Justice wrote to England! Meantime, the fiery orator was elected to the Assembly, and next year we find him declaring there that no taxes could be arbitrarily levied without the consent of the legislative body. That was the advantage, he said, of being an Englishman rather than a Frenchman; and for the Colonists he held that the rights of a Colonial Assembly were the same as were those of the House of Commons for residents of England. To such outspoken tones did the policy of the Ministers carry the Colonists in the first two years of George III.'s reign.

By the first day of the next year (1763) it was

admitted that the plans of the Ministry included the permanent quartering of twenty battalions on the Colonies after the peace in Europe, the Colonies themselves to bear the expense. It soon came out that the scheme went even farther, contemplating the withdrawal of the Colonial Charters, and the imposition of a uniform system of government throughout the Colonies. Two years were spent in talking about this revolutionary scheme, while the Colonists vehemently protested—the substance of their language being that their Charters were inviolable, and that taxation by a Parliament in which they were not represented was tyranny. At last the fateful Stamp Act was passed in February, 1765; but could not be signed by the King, except by Commission. The pathetic fact was not known at the time that his reason was already unsettled. The patience of the Colonists was now but nine years from the breaking point.

The first effect of the Stamp Act was an outburst of universal opposition in the Colonies, and a concerted movement to paralyze its enforcement by extorting the resignation of every Stamp Officer. The next and even more ominous effect was the assemblage in New York of a Congress containing duly authorized re-

presentatives of nearly all the Colonies. Against the opposition thus concentrated the Act was powerless. Scarcely a stamp was sold, and after setting all America in a flame the Stamp Act was repealed, thirteen months after it had been passed.

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Then was the moment, perhaps the last moment, when the hands of the clock could have been turned back. But the good will aroused in America by the repeal was wasted. Sixteen months later (June, 1767) the hour had struck, and the Ministers carried through Parliament the Bill decreeing the American Revolution. It was a Bill reviving the effort to tax the Colonists by a distant Parliament in which they were not represented, for purposes about which they had not been consulted, and reviving it less than a year and a half after they thought the mistake had been acknowledged and definitely abandoned by the repeal of the Stamp tax. The new Bill, as if nothing had happened, imposed certain duties on articles imported into America, including a tax of three pence a pound on tea.

The Tea tax

The Colonists instantly prepared to resist. Otis and other leaders counselled moderation, but submission was impossible. By a common

impulse they decided on non-intercourse as the effective answer to an attempt to collect taxes on goods they were expected to buy. In New England, New York, and Pennsylvania alone, that answer cost British merchants a reduction of over two-thirds in their sale of the taxed articles in a single year. The movement spread till before 1770 it included all the Colonies, and, as might have been foreseen, gave a wonderful stimulus to home manufactures. Within a year a single town in Massachusetts made 80,000 pairs of women's shoes and was selling them throughout the Colonies. The Ministry resentfully talked of transporting leading men to England to be tried for treason under an old Statute of Henry VIII. Then it sent more troops. Lord North, speaking for the Ministry and the King, said: "America must fear you before she can love you. I am against repealing the last Act of Parliament, securing to us a revenue out of America. I will never think of repealing it until I see America prostrate at my feet." One of the songs of the day, which were often doggerel, but sometimes poetry, was soon sung freely in the streets of Boston. It might have been taken as the Colonists' response to Lord North:

"Come, join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall;
To die we can bear, but to serve we disdain;
For shame is to freedom more dreadful than pain.
In freedom we 're born, in freedom we 'll live;
Our purses are ready,
Steady, boys, steady,
Not as slaves, but as freemen, our money we 'll give."

The government demanded that a Massachusetts Legislature should rescind its Acts, and dissolved it when it refused. The legislative functions of the New York Legislature had already been suspended. As the tension increased and there was more talk of using the troops, one Colonist wrote: "We cannot believe that they will draw the sword on their own children, but if they do, our blood is more at their service than our liberties."

The troops

There was, as the circumstances made inevitable, constant friction in Boston between the troops and the exasperated citizens. Affrays were not infrequent. At last came the inevitable petty officer who loses his head in an emergency. One of this species gave the word to fire too soon, and the people were maddened by what was called the Boston Massacre. But in the spirit of conformity to law, as they understood it, so characteristic of the

Colonists, they held a town meeting, opened it with prayer, considered the occurrence, and ordered that the soldiers concerned be tried for their lives in the civil courts. It was characteristic again that such popular leaders as John Adams and Josiah Quincy, under a conviction of their duty as lawyers, answered the appeal of the officer in command, appeared in his defence, and saved him. More friction following, the troops were ordered to leave the town, and were actually sent to the citadel. Conflicts occurred in New York and elsewhere, with similar excitement.

Partial repeal

Once again the Ministry wavered in a course that threatened such storms, and in March, 1770, repealed all its taxes on America, save that on tea. The non-importation agreements relaxed. New York, which had held to them more firmly than any of the associate Colonies, wearied of seeing its imports fall off five parts out of six, while the others profited by its abstinence, and so promoted a joint movement for resuming trade in everything but tea. By August, 1770, London was rejoicing at the return of American orders—and somewhat misconstruing them.

But, as if heaven had ordained that every op-

portunity should be thrown away, a month later the fortress commanding Boston, built and maintained by the Colony to be garrisoned, as the Charter guaranteed, by its militia under the command of its Governor, was taken over by the regular troops; and the harbor of Boston made the rendezvous of all ships stationed in North America. The answer of Massachusetts to martial law was a commission to Benjamin Franklin to represent it in stating its grievances to the Ministry in London.

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Events were now moving in too resistless a current for that benignant messenger of peace to check them. On a paltry question of exempting its Commissioners of Customs from taxation on their salaries, the Governor came again in conflict with the Massachusetts Assembly, and claimed for the Crown an unheard-of power.

Irritation everywhere

A few months later (January, 1772), South Carolina was aggrieved at having been induced to establish fixed salaries for the judges if made permanent officials, only to have their own judges forthwith removed, and an Irishman, a Scotchman, and a Welshman sent over to take these permanent places.

Two or three months later Virginia felt out-

raged at having its efforts to restrict the slave trade thwarted by an instruction to the Governor "upon pain of the highest displeasure, to assent to no law by which the importation of slaves should be in any respect prohibited or obstructed." An appeal was taken to the Throne, and reached England just as Lord Mansfield had decided that a slave becomes free the moment he touches English soil. But not even that could secure a hearing for the Virginia appeal, or English consent to the Virginia law to restrict the slave trade.

His Majesty's ship "Gaspee" needlessly exasperated the Rhode Islanders by taking live stock, detaining vessels, and making illegal seizures of goods. The Chief Justice gave an opinion against these acts. The Admiral overruled the Chief Justice, and said if the people of Newport attempted to rescue any vessel he would hang them as pirates. Thereupon, when the "Gaspee," pursuing the Providence packet, ran aground, a few men from Providence and Bristol boarded her, overpowered the offensive lieutenant and his crew, set them ashore and burned the vessel to the water's edge. Commissioners were ordered to find the offenders and send them to England for trial. The Chief Justice refused to permit apprehen-

sions for transportation beyond seas. Then it was proposed to take away the Charter of the Colony.

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Thus every month seemed to add to the popular ferment, and to spread it from one Colony to another.

Meantime what had it all been worth? During the progress of the "Gaspee" business the Stamp Office found that it had spent twelve thousand pounds in America to get a revenue of fifteen hundred, and even this revenue came only from Canada and the West Indies. That was what the Stamp tax was worth. Ships and soldiers employed to enforce the law taxing tea had cost enormously, and the East India Company had lost the sale of half-a-million pounds worth of tea per year, while the total revenue from the tax on it amounted to eighty-five pounds. That was what the Tea tax was worth.

What was done with the tea

So at last the East India Company begged for relief, and asked leave to export to America free of all duties. Lord North preferred another way. He held to the tax in America, but gave the Company a drawback on such export of all the import duties it had paid. The Company was warned that this meant trouble, but Lord

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North would listen to no objections. He said he meant "to try the question with America." So it was tried. The tea was sent to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. Boston threw it into the harbor, 16th December, 1773. New York was ready to do the same, but adverse winds kept the ship away. Philadelphia, through a town meeting of five thousand men, "persuaded" the consignee to resign and the captain to take his ship and cargo back to London. Charleston "persuaded" the consignee to resign, there was nobody to pay the duty or sell the tea, and it rotted in the cellars where it was stored. And, finally, when a tea ship at last reached New York (19th April, 1774), four months after the Boston occurrence, it was sent back the next day, while eighteen chests of tea found in another vessel were merely thrown into the bay. Lord North's experiment was complete! Also the substantial union of the Colonies was revealed.

Franklin insulted

Franklin had been furnished with certain letters by the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts, quite at variance with their public professions, and evidently designed to foment existing difficulties and secretly pro-

voke the Ministry to take yet more stringent measures against the Colony. He thought it right to send those letters to the Speaker of the Assembly. Ultimately, though contrary to his expectation, they became public, and naturally aroused fierce resentment against the American-born officers, who were thus found deceiving and underhandedly conspiring against their countrymen, and bringing the military occupation upon them. The Assembly petitioned the King for the removal of the exposed Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, and Franklin was instructed to present the petition. Lord Dartmouth received it with his usual courtesy; but when it was referred to the Privy Council for a hearing, the whole case went off, not on the obvious guilt of the double-dealing officials, but on the alleged misconduct of Franklin in exposing them by showing their letters. Franklin, now venerable and distinguished throughout Europe, was kept standing at the bar while Wedderburne, the Solicitor-General, insulted and lampooned him for stealing or betraying private correspondence —and this from a Ministry that habitually violated the seal of every letter it cared for and could intercept in the mails! The Lords in

Council roared with delight. The petition which all men knew to be true was dismissed as "groundless, vexatious, and scandalous." But years afterwards, when Wedderburne died, the King he had thus served said: "He has not left a greater knave behind him in my dominions." The King could not say that of the man that had opposed him — Franklin, the faithful servant of his own country, the idol of France, and the admiration of the world.

The final stage

The work to which every step of the Ministry had for years been tending was nearly finished. In March, 1774, Lord North carried through Parliament a Bill closing the port of Boston till the tea was paid for, and till the King should be satisfied of the good conduct of the city for the future. Burke and Fox made the debate memorable and splendid, and Lord Dartmouth showed signs of the desire to conciliate, always gratefully remembered in his relation to the Colonies. But the same Lord Mansfield who had decided that a slave could not exist on English soil, while the Ministry he supported was refusing to let Virginia limit the slave trade, now encouraged that Ministry to the uttermost, exclaiming, "The sword is drawn,

and you must throw away the scabbard. Pass this Act, and you will be across the Rubicon." He told the truth, more exactly than he knew.

General Gage, military Commander-in-Chief for all North America, and now made Civil Governor of Massachusetts also, was sent out with four more regiments to close the port of Boston, quarter troops in the town, bring the ring-leaders in the late disturbances to punishment for high treason, abolish town meetings, except for selecting town officers, appoint and remove sheriffs at pleasure, and give sheriffs so appointed the selection of juries. If the Colony had been already conquered, harder usage could scarcely have been proposed. But General Gage thought the conquest easy. He had assured the King that the people of Massachusetts "will be lyons whilst we are lambs, but if we take the resolute part, they will undoubtedly prove very weak."

This time the answer of America was a Continental Congress. New York proposed it through her "Sons of Liberty." Virginia burgesses, after being dissolved by the Governor, held a meeting elsewhere, adopted it, and asked Massachusetts to appoint the time and place of meeting. The Massachusetts Assembly en-

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gaged in that business, when General Gage, hearing what was on foot, sent to dissolve them, but found the door locked. It was not opened until five delegates had been appointed to attend a Continental Congress in Philadelphia on September 1, 1774 — about five months after Parliament had passed the Boston Port Bill!

Lexington and Concord

A convention of towns in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, resolved that a King who violates the chartered rights of his people forfeits their allegiance, and it therefore refused obedience to the recent Act. One of the first things the Continental Congress did was to send Paul Revere to bear to Boston their warm approval of the Suffolk County resolutions. General Gage now undertook to arrest Adams and Hancock, as conspicuous leaders in this policy, and to transport them to England for trial. He sent a body of regular troops to do it under cover of night. Warren started Paul Revere on a midnight ride, ahead of the British troops, to give the alarm. At Lexington these troops came upon a body of minute men commanded by the grandfather of Theodore Parker, ordered them to disperse, and as they still stood, grim but undemonstrative, fired upon them. Eight fell and ten more were wounded. Concord followed

an hour or two later, the embattled farmers fired the shot heard round the world, and the war was begun. Franklin, seeing that there was no more hope in London, was already upon the ocean, returning to take his place with his own people.

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I have finished the story. What remains is merely the fighting — the ghastly civil war between Great Britain and her sons.

Both sides won

But the contest was not really between the British people and their colonizing sons, and as a matter of fact both profited by the result. Even the fighting was largely between Americans and Hessians. The Ministry hired soldiers to carry on its war, because Great Britain did not readily furnish them. The actual contest was between what are now universally recognized as Anglo-Saxon principles of government, and a movement under the King of the day that would have set England back to the times of Charles I. The Colonists were inspired by the Protestant Reformation and by Magna Charta. The intellectual emancipation that came from the one and the fervor for personal rights that came from the other reached their natural development easier and quicker amid the untrammelled surroundings

of a new world. Their triumph checked a reaction in England, and the British Government of the Nineteenth Century was distinctly more advantageous to the people, more glorious for the nation, and a greater beneficence to Europe and the world, because of this struggle with the Colonists in the last quarter of the Eighteenth.

It used to be said that American histories of that period were unfriendly and unfair to Great Britain. Perhaps they were. At the close of this civil war with the Mother Country, Americans may have been somewhat in the temper of the Puritans after the Parliamentary wars, or of the Royalists after the restoration. Certainly they had not reached that stage in the evolution of free government which enabled them, eighty years later, to close another civil war without a single execution and with a speedy return to the defeated side of all its political privileges. It has even been said that our histories now tend to perpetuate an old unfairness and bitterness. If that were ever true, I hope and believe it is true no longer. At any rate, Americans, while not always agreeing, accept in the main with pleasure the work upon that period of recent English historians like the lamented Lecky. They

are satisfied with the admirable history of "The American Revolution," on which the Right Hon. Sir George Otto Trevelyan, late of your own Government, is still engaged. And they are likewise content with the comprehensive report of what that Revolution led to, in the luminous pages of "The American Commonwealth," by a member of your present Government, the Right Hon. James Bryce, Secretary for Ireland. May I take the liberty, if not as an American at least as a loyal and grateful son of Cambridge, to add and adopt the lines of your great Victorian poet, with which one of these Englishmen introduces his work:

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"O, thou, that sendest out the man
To rule by land and sea,
Strong mother of a Lion-line,
Be proud of those strong sons of thine
Who wrench'd their rights from thee."

When the war began, Edmund Burke estimated the population of the Colonies at from one-fifth to one-fourth that of Great Britain. White and black, it scarcely reached two and three-quarter millions. When the war closed there were 2,389,000 whites, and probably in all little short of three millions. Seven years later, at the first periodical census in 1790,

Growth and influence

there were nearly four millions. The war had cost the Colonists one hundred and forty millions of dollars. Eighty years later they had another civil war which left them with a debt of 2,844,649,626 dollars, and with a population of thirty-five millions; and to-day their debt is reduced more than one-half (to 1,284,461,413 dollars), and their population increased to over eighty millions (seventy-six millions by the census of six years ago), to say nothing of the population of island dependencies. Then they formed a narrow fringe along the Atlantic coast, with a few frontier settlements breaking through the gaps in the Alleghany range to the fertile valleys on its western slopes; to-day they overspread a continent, and swarm in the islands of the sea.

To follow the effects of this rise of the United States farther now is beside my present purpose. That its echo was first heard amid the crashing of old institutions in the French Revolution cannot be doubted. It was certainly a factor in the subsequent rapid extension of popular rights throughout Europe, the broadening of citizenship, the freer participation of the people in their governments. As it stimulated liberty by its political development, so it stimulated material welfare by its inventions,

its products, and its opportunities. We can scarcely conceive now of a world without American food and American cotton, without the American applications of steam and electricity, or without the American outlet for superfluous energy and superfluous population.

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The people of the new nation held, as firmly as they had while Colonists, that there should be no taxation without representation, and they were some time in doubt as to whether there should be any representation without taxation. In several States ownership of a freehold of fifty acres or a town lot was necessary; in scarcely any could the suffrage be exercised without a return of considerable taxable property, real or personal. A reasonable degree of intelligence was also exacted and the illiterate were excluded. Far fewer offices than now were elective. The judges were generally appointed, sometimes for seven years, sometimes during good behavior. Even the delegates to the Continental Congress were chosen not by the people but by the Legislatures.

There was no hindrance in learning trades; no limit to the hours of labor; no power to keep a man from working if he wanted to work and found work. The Colonists would have ac-

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cepted unreservedly those golden words with which Clemenceau lately thrilled the French Chamber of Deputies, but while accepting them would have wondered why he thought it necessary to say so obvious a thing in so solemn a way, "J'estime que tout homme, qui a besoin de travailler et qui trouve du travail, a le droit de travailler; j'estime que la société et les pouvoirs publics ont le devoir de lui assurer l'exercice de ce droit."

Secret of the success

The result of it all is the marvel of modern history. It was one of your own prelates and scholars who said of it, "Time's noblest offspring is the last." What in the final analysis made the success? — for who shall say the splendid growth will survive, if what made it be lost?

Well, first of all it was made, as most successes are, by character. America in the making was intelligent, moral, religious, and religiously devoted to the education of children. It was desperately earnest. It was alert and industrious — almost without a class that only amuses itself. It was passionately attached to the personal rights of Englishmen. It had an inborn respect for authority and reverence for law. Its ancestors had been used to represen-

tative institutions for centuries, and it was thoroughly trained in parliamentary government.

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And next the success was made by circumstance. The inefficient were sifted out — those left were a picked class. They were alone, in a wild but fertile and, as it seemed, boundless land. Opportunities opened on every hand; the time, like the climate, was electric, and there was an absolute freedom for individual initiative.

It is not sure that such a success could be won now; it is not sure that such a government as they founded could be carried on now, if that character were materially changed. Is it even sure that the success could be maintained, if those circumstances were materially altered, and particularly if that fecund freedom of individual initiative should be destroyed, by the collectivist or socialist tendencies of the times?

But such a catastrophe is not to be thought of. Whatever may be the wild speculations of the hour, whatever the temporary variations from the historic course, no vessel that carries the English-speaking races has lost its chart, on none has the compass gone hopelessly astray. The old headlights still burn. Inspired by

the same traditions, led by the same instincts, these races in either hemisphere, in whatever zone, on whatever continent or island, will surely in the end hold fast to the ancient characteristics of a strong, free people, and so keep secure their place in the van of human progress.

The End